

Sean Phillips- Teacher Brien McMahon High School- Norwalk

In opposition to HB5078

Mathematics was never invented, it was discovered. Throughout history, brilliant minds put names and representations to mathematical properties that had always existed. Therefore, the best way to learn, and truly understand, math is through similar exploration. In my third year of teaching in Connecticut, and my first year of teaching the Common Core, I am in support of these new standards and how they are helping my students explore and discover mathematical concepts.

In my first two years in the classroom, teaching an algebra concept, like the slope-intercept form of a line, was always a difficult task. It's a simple procedure, but for some reason students had a hard time grasping the concept. This problematic situation does not reflect their intelligence level. In fact, I have seen them succeed in more difficult mathematical tasks. Their lack of understanding was because they were most likely unable to conceive the idea of a graphed line.

The Common Core, however, helps students understand concepts, like graphing a line, and the usages behind it. In the case of slope-intercept form, they are first presented with real world application problems and graph them by plotting points. They then explore the slope and y-intercept, make them into equations to then *discover* the form of a slope intercept equation. This will lead to them graphing a line from different equations with simplicity. When they learn math through their own discovery, that piece of information belongs to them. Because they own their own discovery of the subject matter, then it will be easier for them to retain it for further usage.

This year, my students are exceling in higher order thinking due to the discovery learning style that is called for under the Common Core Standards. The new standards allow my students to practically teach themselves the subject matter and to retain concepts as abstract as graphing lines, so that it becomes second nature. As a teacher, I have upheld the mantra, "Telling is not teaching, and being told is not being taught." I feel that this year, with the implementation of the Common Core, I have been able to help students discover mathematics as opposed to drilling algorithms of how to solve specific problems. The Common Core holds my

students to a higher standard, one that will allow them to have personal ownership over their own learning, education, and futures.